

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 125823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (SMITH, HUNTER)

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPED AMCITS

REFS: DAR ES SALAAM 1796, 1795, 1769; KINSHASA 4477, 4438,
4413

1. REFTELS HAVE HELPED GREATLY IN CLARIFYING POSSIBILITIES
AND PROBLEMS BEFORE US IN TRYING TO ESTABLISH CONTACT AND
OPEN COMMUNICATIONS WITH KABILA GROUP.

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2. FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS WE WISH TO HOLD OFF ON SCENARIO

WHICH WOULD INVOLVE SENDING STEINER TO LAC NYANZA TO MEET PRP ENVOY. GIVEN CAUTION RAISED KINSHASA 4438 ABOUT UNCERTAINTY OF ASSURING PHYSICAL SAFETY OF PRP ENVOY LEAVING AND REENTERING ZAIRE, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT DANGER WHICH WOULD BE POSED TO CAPTIVES SHOULD ENVOY COME TO ANY HARM. INDEED WE QUESTION WHETHER PRP WOULD VENTURE SENDING ENVOY BASED ON BROADCAST ASSURANCE ALONE. WE ALSO WISH TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE THREAT TO STEINER'S OWN SAFETY WHICH DIRECT CONTACT WITH KIDNAPPERS MIGHT ENTAIL.

3. WE PROPOSE INSTEAD MOVING AHEAD IMMEDIATELY WITH EFFORT ENLIST BISHOP CATARZI AND ITALIAN CATHOLIC NETWORK

AS INTERMEDIARY. SUGGEST THIS BE DONE BY CONSUL LOVING ACCOMPANIED, FOR CONTINUITY SAKE, BY MACFARLANE. SINCE IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT FAMILIES WISH TO KEEP STEINER INVOLVED AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE, AND IF AGREEABLE TO HIM AND TO FAMILIES, SUGGEST HE ALSO TAKE PART IN THE CONTACT WITH CATARZI. THERE MIGHT BE ADVANTAGE TO HAVING DUTCH REP PRESENT AS WELL, IF DUTCH GOVT. AGREES.

THEREFORE, IF EMBASSIES DAR AND KINSHASA CONCUR, PROPOSE MACFARLANE AND STEINER RENDEVOUZ ASAP WITH LOVING IN BUJUMBURA AND TOGETHER PROCEED TO UVIRA TO CONTACT CATARZI. (EMBASSY DAR SHOULD OFFER ZAIRE EMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM COMMUNICATIONS HELP TO EXPEDITE REQUISITE VISA APPROVAL FOR STEINER FROM KINSHASA.)

4. MISSION IN UVIRA WOULD BE TO ASCERTAIN: A) AVAILABILITY AND WILLINGNESS OF CATARZI OR ONE OF HIS PEOPLE CONTACT KABILA GROUPS AND B) WILLINGNESS TO ACT IN SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY AS INTERMEDIARY PROVIDED SUCH ARRANGEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO STUDENTS' FAMILIES. IF ANSWER IS YES ON BOTH COUNTS, BRIEF WE WOULD GIVE CATARZI WOULD BE TO CONTACT PRP, ASCERTAIN WELFARE OF CAPTIVES, AND APPEAL TO PRP TO RELEASE THEM; AMONG ARGUMENTS HE COULD USE WOULD BE THAT KIDNAPPING HAS ACHIEVED WIDE EXPOSURE FOR PRP BUT THAT IF CAPTIVES ARE HARMED OR IF CAPTIVITY IS PROLONGED, WORLD REACTION WILL BE CRITICAL AND CAUSE OF PRP WILL BE HARMED.

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5. IF CATARZI IS ABLE AND WILLING TO MAKE CONTACT WITH PRP BUT UNWILLING ACT AS INTERMEDIARY HIMSELF, HE COULD AS MINIMUM CONVEY MESSAGE THAT PARENTS WISH TO OPEN DIALOGUE WITH GROUP, ARE SEEKING MEANS TO DO SO, AND WOULD LIKE PRP'S SUGGESTION AS TO HOW IT COULD BE HANDLED.

6. EVEN IF CATARZI WILL ACCEPT INTERMEDIARY ROLE, GOZ

AGREEMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE HE OR SOMEONE SELECTED BY HIM COULD PROCEED TO AREA WHERE CAPTIVES HELD TO MAKE CONTACT. REQUEST, THEREFORE, THAT IF EMBASSY KINSHASA CONCURS IN ABOVE SCENARIO, IT ACT IMMEDIATELY TO SECURE GOZ APPROVAL OF CATARZI MISSION ON CONTINGENCY BASIS.

7. EMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER KINSHASA DAO PLANE WOULD BE USEFUL IN MOVING MACFARLANE AND/OR STEINER TO BUJUMBURA. (UVIRA CAN OF COURSE BE REACHED OVERLAND FROM BUJUMBURA IN SHORT TIME) INGERSOLL

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